

# TAMING THE WOLF WITHIN: Role of Religion in Countering Political Violence

Paul Chummar Chittilappilly♦

## 1. Introduction

“Peace Breaker – Peace Maker” is the challenging poster for International Women’s Day on 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 here in Kenya, a nation where more than 10,000 Kenyans still remaining in limbo after the Post-Election-Violence in Kenya 2007-2008<sup>1</sup>. During this period more than 1500 people were ruthlessly killed and more than 250,000 were displaced. Although the barbarous forms of fresh acts of violence and slaughter of fellow Kenyans has ceased, violence in the name of a particular tribe or political party or religious affiliation is still on the agenda of many Sub-Saharan countries, like Somalia, Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo as well as in South Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Hardly any of the 195 nations of our global village are without any conflict whether political, religious, ethnic, or self-interest or a combination of these factors. Many people in these countries are wounded and distressed to the depth of their souls, and, to certain extent, angry and revengeful. The number of political and religious martyrs continues to grow throughout the world. The spiral of violence goes up and up! Although the conflicts start with the differences of interests, demands, feelings, aims, ideologies, values, norms, roles, systems, or activities etc., every conflict has a personal character and every violent act is carried out by people, person against person, person against society, or even person against nature. Violence is a human reality, as old as human history!

This article is a brief search for some aspects of the role of religion in countering political violence. I do this from my religious background as a Christian and as somebody who lives and works in the African continent.

---

♦**Dr. Paul Chummar Chittilappilly CMI** is Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. His research areas are *Political Ethics* and *Bioethics*. For more details: <http://www.paulchummar-cmi.org>. Email: [paul.chummar@cmi.in](mailto:paul.chummar@cmi.in)

<sup>1</sup>According to media reports on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010 more than 10,000 displaced people marched from the Rift Valley to the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, to submit their complaints about the non-settlement since the Post-Election Violence of Kenya in December 2007-2008 to the president Mwai Kibaki and the Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

The first part considers two dimensions in the existence of every person: violence and peace; in the second part the role of religion with regard to political violence is investigated; the third section searches for the common ground between both politics and religion; and the possible ways of taming the wolf within human beings through religion are specified in the final section.

## **2. Two Dimensions in the Existence of a Person: Violence and Peace**

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside every person. He said, “My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ inside us all. One is ‘Evil’. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is ‘Good’. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.” The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?” The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.” The same person can foster either peace or violence. The word violence stems from the Indo-German root *val*. The Latin *valere* means *to be strong* and *violare*: *to treat violently*. In ethics, violence represents the key understanding of inhuman acts that destroy the peace and harmony between persons and in a society. Basically there are two ways in which violence can be controlled: *politically* through *laws and regulations* in society, and through the virtue of *love*, the potential power of which can be fostered by a true *religion*. Politics and religion are two quite different paradigms for the establishment of peace.

### **2.1. Objectives of a Good Politics**

A political system is a necessary structure for a distorted world. According to Aristotle, every person is *zoon politikon*, a political being, although the rights of citizens are distinguished from other inhabitants such as resident foreigners, slaves, children and seniors. Politics is an inseparable dimension of every citizen. Everyone has a certain political awareness and everyone is concerned about good politics for all. Wherever politics enables its citizens to work, trade, celebrate, and generally to do all those things which enrich human existence and enable it to flourish in a peaceful and just way, good politics is seen and experienced by all.<sup>2</sup> Good politics

---

<sup>2</sup>Franz Böckle, *Ja zum Menschen. Bausteine einer konkreten Moral*, München: Kösel 1995, 118.

aims to eradicate human suffering as a prerequisite for a sustainable peace among the subjects of a nation. It fosters a decent, just human life for all its subjects exercising equality and without partiality for any particular group or party. It has an absolute priority to achieve a total communal development where all citizens enjoy the non-negotiable values of freedom and human dignity and where human rights are respected. Further, it is the nature and function of a good political system to undertake steps to ensure a harmonious life for all its citizens, and harmonious relationships with neighbouring nations and the international community through its political and governmental structures and systems to serve and to develop humanity as a whole. No political system today can shrink back into the boundaries of its own nation in its daily governance. The world has become a *global village*; what happens in one nation directly and indirectly affect other nations.

## 2.2. Need for Good Politics

The lack of good politics seriously affects human flourishing.

Individuals, families and the various groups which make up the civil community are aware that they cannot achieve a truly human life by their own unaided efforts. They see the need for a wider community, within which each one makes his specific contribution every day toward an ever broader realization of the common good. For this purpose they set up a political community according to various forms. The political community exists, consequently, for the sake of the common good, in which it finds its full justification and significance, and the source of its inherent legitimacy. Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection.<sup>3</sup>

In countries where violence prevails, the primary goal of politics is not for “the common good” of all its subjects but for the fulfilment of the selfish motives of the politicians, their relatives and friends. When repeated promises of politicians, especially during election campaigns, remain unfulfilled, violence becomes uglier and increasingly acquires the power of evil. It is particularly distressing when religious freedom is oppressed:

However, those political systems, prevailing in some parts of the world are to be reprovved which hamper civic or religious freedom,

---

<sup>3</sup>John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*: AAS 53, 1961, 417.

victimize large numbers through avarice and political crimes, and divert the exercise of authority from the service of the common good to the interests of one or another faction or of the rulers themselves.”<sup>4</sup>

The solution to this trap of helplessness could be to reflect on the values of different religions to attain a sustainable peace.

### **2.3. The Religious Dimension of a Citizen**

Just as Immanuel Kant speaks of a moral disposition in every person, so also there is a religious character in every person whether or not it is cared for and fostered. Since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the innate religious character of every human being has been systematically and scientifically identified. Whereas some religious philosophers speak of a religious *a priori of human consciousness*, others, for example Karl Rahner, identify it as the *supernatural existential power of the intellectual process* of a human being.<sup>5</sup> I personally am convinced that a religious disposition in each and every human is an intrinsic value, whether fostered or neglected, since every person is created in the *Imago Dei* (Gen 1: 26) and *Opus Dei*. It is a personal moral obligation, moreover, to make use of this innate power to tame the violence that exists in each person and promote peace. It is a reality that in the nations where there is violence there is also an increasing religious disposition and deep religious profile. In short, it can be said that a person has both political and religious identities in his/her self. Both dimensions are complementary and to achieve the fullness of life the person needs a certain social and political matrix.

### **3. Role of Religion during Political Violence**

The religious dimension becomes more relevant during the period of political crisis and violence since the prevailing political system is not capable of establishing and ensuring peace and promoting a just society. What then are the resources that can effect reconciliation, a sustainable peace, unity and harmony during a time of tumult and endless violence? How can religions promote joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion so that a peaceful life may be guaranteed? To attain these goals by means of

---

<sup>4</sup>Austin Flannery, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, Mumbai: St. Pauls, 1999, 861. (*Gadium et spes* No 73 # 4).

<sup>5</sup>Heinrich M. Schmidinger, “*Religiöse Anlage*” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Bd. 8, Freiburg: i. Br. 1999<sup>3</sup>, 1082-1083.

religion there are three important steps to be taken. First, religions have to help their subjects to remove all the blocks in their journey to attain peace. Second, religions have to transmit ethical values through education so that their subjects become able to practise them in daily life. Third, religions have to promote the virtues in the lives of their subjects to form operative habits. For, according Aristotle, virtues make a subject good, and make the subject's work good. Thus the genuineness of any religion can be established by whether these goals are prioritised in their undertakings. Though different religions and confessions are not identical in their objectives, content and forms of living, the restoration and promotion of peace, harmony and unity through reconciliation is indisputably the aim of any genuine religion.

### **3.1. Religion: The Conscience of a Society**

Although the most basic function of religion can be said to be the worship of God through its practices, the realities of the lives of its adherents are an inseparable dimension of its primary goals. The genuineness of the worship of God must be in contact with the realities of the lives of the worshippers. A religion limited to the promotion of the cultic role is of no use to individuals or to a society or a nation at large! Every religion needs a community so that the members of a religion can worship God and every society needs religion for the preservation of morals, law and order.<sup>6</sup> The relationship between religion and society is therefore reciprocal. What happens in a society does not occur outside the sphere of a religion, but within the realities of the lives of its people, that are closely related to the practices of person's religion. Thus they are also affairs of a religion.

A religion has to imbibe its spirit from its Holy Scripture and revelations of truth so that it maintains the status of an uncorrupted conscience of a society or a nation, even amidst the most complicated political situation. The proclamation of a religion always has to be in accordance with the truth that guarantees the authenticity of the religion and makes it trustworthy and that serves as the conscience of a society. In the same way the practices of the religion are to be true, just, authentic, integral and always ethically upright. Only then can it be a watchful conscience of the politics that governs a nation and its subjects. Moreover, a religion has to remain absolutely neutral and independent and be the

---

<sup>6</sup>Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion*, London: Souvenir Press, 1974, 39.

powerful and fearless voice of justice and truth in the daily affairs of the nation. Although the religion tackles human issues its final goal is to be divine and it should never become a political instrument to achieve a worldly goal. Its clear voice of truth and justice should be particularly for the voiceless, marginalised, downtrodden, displaced and persecuted and should never be hushed up when it protects human dignity, human rights, and the protection of peace and harmony in the society. In short, a religion is not only concerned with life after death, but also has to do with the daily life of its followers: life before death!

### **3.2. Different Poles of Politics and Religion**

The aim of good politics is social development and the improvement of human life. The fulfilment of such a social vision of politics alone, however, cannot establish a sustainable peace in human hearts and minds. Social development under a totally dictatorial regime does not provide harmony and unity among its subjects as it has been proved during the Nazi regime in Germany and by the communist countries of Eastern Europe or elsewhere. Human freedom, respect of human dignity and rights are more important than mere social vision and social development for there is a higher thirst and hunger in every human being, namely the quest for one's own salvation. "Bread is important, freedom is more important, but the most important for a human being is the unbroken faithfulness to his/her creator and the worship of him."<sup>7</sup> Religion's goal is to help its adherents in unbroken faithfulness and authentic worship, to live a faithful life in God so that they can live in harmony and bliss. Any genuine religion is more than a program for a social vision for a better quality of life. And salvation through politics is sheer utopia! Although the prerequisite for peace and harmony is the balanced and sustainable welfare of all the subjects of a nation, such a social vision is not be equated with salvation. Although Jesus of Nazareth, for example, fed the hungry, healed the sick, consoled the desperate, his main concern was to proclaim salvation for human beings and the kingdom of God. A true religion cannot look away from the realities of the suffering of its members and does its best to alleviate these sufferings in its proclamation. Nevertheless

---

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Delp, a Jesuit (1907-1945) wrote these words to his nephew Sebastian before he was hanged by the Nazi regime for his deep faithfulness to his religion and his Order of Socius Jesu (S.J.) and for his undaunted voice against the ruthlessness of a dictatorial Nazi regime in Berlin-Plötzense, Germany.

there is a “real-symbiotic-relationship”<sup>8</sup> between religion and politics since both aims to serve human beings. Whereas the social visions of a good politics looks to a better life for the citizens of a nation, salvation aims at reconciliation among its subjects in a world of broken relationships and thus contributes towards peace, which is “not as the world gives” (John 14: 27b), and a sustainable unity and harmony. Religious bliss is not the enlightenment created by a certain social development of a certain era, but is the in-breaking of God’s kingdom in history which creates “a new heaven and new earth” (Rev 21: 1) in the hearts and minds of religious people. Human salvation cannot be created by human power, but can only be received as a gift of God!

### 3.3. Kingdom of God and Kingdom of the World

Augustine of Hippo speaks of two different understandings of *seculum* in his *De Civitate Dei*: one of God and another of the world. According to him neither is to be identified completely with the church or with worldly empire. But the state, according to Augustine, consists of the human beings of which it is composed; its character is determined by the character of its citizens in terms of justice: if there is no justice in the individuals, there will be no justice and peace in the state itself. Further, in a later treatise he says that a state is an assemblage of reasonable beings bound together by a common agreement concerning the objects of their love. So, in short, it can be said that justice and love are the basis for a peaceful state. Both are also religious virtues. The state is useful for limiting the awfulness of life. Secondly, according to Augustine, the notion the *seculum* cannot be a matter of indifference for Christians. Thus even in our pluralistic society politics cannot be a neutral matter for any religious person. The heavenly pilgrims need to take note of the world as well:

So the heavenly city, too, uses the earthly peace in the course of its earthly pilgrimage. It cherishes and desires, as far as it may without compromising its faith and devotion, the orderly coherence of men’s wills concerning the things which pertain to the mortal nature of man; and this earthly peace it refers to the attainment of heavenly peace” (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XIX, 17).

With regard to the clear separation between politics and religion Jesus says: “My kingdom does not belong to this world” (John 18: 36). On the one hand Jesus confesses the reality of two kingdoms but at the same

---

<sup>8</sup>Franz Kamphaus, *Der Preis der Freiheit*, Mainz: Grünewald, 1987, 105.

time he marks a very clear border between the affairs of politics and of religion. He respects worldly authority without “buts” and “ifs”: “Pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and God what belongs to God” (Mathew 22: 21), but he keeps an absolute distance from the attractive power of politics. The neutrality of a state and its politics towards religious membership and respect for the freedom for every person to exercise religion supports both religion and the state simultaneously and contributes to the development of each dimension’s goal and density. Modern human rights codes have reinforced the neutrality of the state and respect for the freedom of its subjects of any origin and creed. What belongs to state belongs to the state, what belongs to the religion, belongs to the religion, not less and not more than that! A mixing up of the two for some advantage damages the credibility of both religion and politics and does not serve the goals of either. World history repeatedly shows that such a combination ends in disaster.

### **3.4. Danger of a Political Religion**

A religion must communicate religious values, but it has to be neutral in its position as the clear conscience of a society since its objective is not to gain political power either directly or indirectly. The strong temptation to be on the side of the influential, powerful, and rich, is always present even for the most authentic religions, in its institutions, leaders and adherents. Even Jesus, the Son of God was not exempted: “I will give you all this power and their splendour, for it has been handed over to me, for me to give to anyone I choose. Do homage, then, to me, and it shall all be yours” (Luke 4:6). If politics creeps into the centre of any religion, religion becomes a political messianic instrument of political ideologies. There will then be severe consequences both for religion and politics as happened, for example, in Nicaragua in 1970s and 1980s, or as it is still in some Islamic countries. The religion gradually loses its authenticity due to its dependency on politics. Political strategies and declarations are no substitute for the redemption of the world and the salvation of the person for which a religion exists. Nor can politics annihilate the power of evil in the world and create an artificial paradise. Such kinds of illusion were the causes of various dictatorships and totalitarian governments of the past and of the present. It is a dangerous God-complex, at times even among religious leaders, by which the illiterate, poor and oppressed people are



brainwashed. Political leaders with a God-complex are the most dangerous leaders in human society.

#### **4. Common Ground between Politics and Religion**

##### **4.1. Need of Religion for Morally Upright Politics**

The recognition of freedom of thought, freedom to profess any religion or even not to profess any religion is one of the guarantors for a free and peaceful society. Though religion and social life are linked inextricably the independence of both religion and politics must be respected and exercised. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the secular nation of France, shows how the greatest challenges can be tackled through religious values:

It is in the interests of the Republic [of France] that there exists also a moral reflection inspired by religious convictions. First because secular morality [“*morale laïque*”] always runs the risk of wearing itself out or changing into fanaticism when it isn’t backed up by hope that aspires to the infinite. And then because morality stripped of any ties to transcendence is more exposed to historic contingencies and eventually to facileness. ... Faced with the disappearance of values, and with the upheavals our societies are experiencing, I want to say by my presence that we need the contribution of the Catholic Church, as of the other great religious and spiritual doctrines, to enlighten our choices and construct our future.<sup>9</sup>

The role of religion is extremely important in reconciliation process and sustenance of peace, even in the totally secularised nation. Though different religions have different ways to lead their subjects to God, the earthly goal of all genuine religions is the same: the peace and harmony in this life. This is why in search of sustainable peace for a segregated nation the politicians seek the help of true religious leaders.<sup>10</sup>

##### **4.2. Danger of Religion**

A religion is capable of promoting reconciliation, peace, unity and harmony but world history teaches the bitter fact that a religion is also capable of triggering separation, violence and war among the people.

---

<sup>9</sup>Nicolas Sarkozy: 20 December 2007 in Vatican: <http://galliawatch.blogspot.com/2007/12/shifting-gears.html> (accessed on 19 April 2008).

<sup>10</sup>During the mediation talks in the political crisis of Post Election in Kenya Kofi Annan met with the different religious leaders of Kenya and discussed the different issues of contention to search for just and reliable solutions.

Religion influences its followers and establishes a certain authority over them. The adherents of a religion usually recognise and respect their religious authorities if they represent the values of that particular religion and if they live and act according to their religious vocation and identity. Strictly speaking religious authority, like any other authority, is conferred by others. Nevertheless there is a great misuse of authority by some religious leaders (e.g. religious authority in Iran). To gain such authority for power, influence, fame and worship in the name of the religion is an unfortunate reality among some religious leaders. Any form of idolatry – worshiping or enjoying honour and glory due to God to anything other than God – would disgust a religious person. At the time of Jesus this was one of the controversial issues about the Pharisees. The Hebrew word for Pharisee, *prushim*, means literally “the separated”, separated from God, separated from the original role and trying to gain honour and glory for themselves rather than to attribute it to God.<sup>11</sup> Religious leaders, who deviate from their authentic identity, cannot contribute towards reconciliation, peace, unity, and harmony for their subjects, but rather cause splits, disunity, divisions, and calamities. The more a religious confession gains power and influence, the more is the danger of deviating from the true goal of worship: namely God! The moment religious leaders start to act as if they were gods, it is like the “dance around the golden calf” (cf. 1King 12: 26-33). Religions do not exist to play God, but to worship God and Him alone and to help their adherents to live a faithful life in God. Only God is absolute; not a religion!

## **5. Taming the Wolf within the Humans**

### **5.1. Denial of Violence**

Throughout history there have been tyrants and murderers. To answer violence with new violence, even in the name of the religion, is a perverse act that contradicts the real sense and goal of the religion! At times the only way to a religious solution is accepting “martyrdom” for a just and true cause; it is not “holy war”. The first centuries of Christianity gives us the best example: the early Christians grew up in the blood of the martyrs and not by butchering their opponents. The early Christians took the

---

<sup>11</sup>Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, London: Burns and Oates, 2004, 428-429. But there were also a good number of Pharisees who were promoting religious ethical values and were adherents of Torah, like Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Paul.

ethical instruction of their master and Lord Jesus of Nazareth word for word: “Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and commit every kind of evil against you falsely because of me” (Mt 5:11). Even when the faith of a certain religion is attacked the denial of violence should be the norm for any religious person. The proper authorities should conduct a judicial enquiry if there has been a violent act so that an unjust aggressor can be brought to justice. It is just to protect the religious faith and its practices, but the acceptance of suffering and tolerance prove the authenticity of a religious identity.

## 5.2. Forgiveness

When a person opens himself to confess what he has done, where he collaborated to do evil, and he asks pardon and forgiveness, that person becomes free, free to accept himself, free to forgive others, free even to embrace his enemies. Only true, humble and sincere acknowledgement and confession of one’s own past can help to reintegrate, what has disintegrated. The reintegration sets the person free from the bondage of the past and what still clings to both the delinquent and victim. The past can then be transformed into a realm of freedom, unity and harmony. Forgiveness without any condition is the only solution to setting oneself free from any kind of feelings of revenge which causes further explosions of violence. Such forgiveness can only be achieved as a gift from God; nobody can enforce or dictate it, or buy it through certain contracts or compensations or even by putting another under moral pressure. To help the person to seek forgiveness and to pardon one’s foe and to strengthen them on the way of contrition are the roles of a religion at a time of violence. To be forgiven by God, according to Christian understanding, one has to forgive. “Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either” (Mt 6:14). A perfect life in strict compliance with the Law alone will not make anyone the heirs of the Kingdom of God, but the unconditional forgiveness of the offenders.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Adrian Leske: “Mathew” in William Farmer, *The International Bible Commentary: An Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, Bangalore: TPI 2004, 1342-1345.

### **5.3. Tolerance and Respect for Diversity as Solution in Plurality**

The plurality of religions and their different communal life styles can provoke conflicts in a nation as it has, for example, in South Sudan. Such a multi-cultural and multi-religious community needs a basic culture of recognising and respecting the differences of religions and the practice of faith. It is more than mere tolerance that must gain a real face in the struggle for peace, unity and harmony of all the subjects of a State. Tolerance and diversity are also political virtues where the other, in his national, racial or tribal difference, is not only to be tolerated but also to be accepted and cared for without any “ifs” and “buts” as his own brother and his own sister. Tolerance and diversity overcomes the tendency to overpower the other and the use of violence to achieve one’s goals. The way of tolerance enables one to become more and more open for dialogue and trying to understand the other as she or he is. Tolerance also protects against a nation breaking into segments due to the differences of religions, tribes, or belonging to any other different group, and incorporates and inculcates the values of others. Thus it remains as the stable and supportive pillar of the entire society. In order to stabilise a nation and the lives of its subjects there are some moral imperatives.

### **5.4. Need for Inter-Religious and Inter-Tribal Dialogue**

Where tolerance and support for the other fail religious fanaticism and tribalism will emerge blocking all the aspects of tolerance. There is a serious need for Inter-Religious and Inter-Tribal Dialogue especially at the time of national crisis. History confirms that where there have been attempts to eradicate a particular religion or to humiliate a tribe or membership of a group, actions of violence mushroom and gain rapid and extensive power. It is not the existence of religions or class and creed that have caused millions of victims in modern times, but religious fanaticism, racism, ideologies like national socialism, tribalism and colonialism, like the Nazi regime, Anti-Semitism, Al-Quaeda, etc.

### **5.5. Mutual Contract for a Harmonious Social Life**

A well-formulated and well-defined contract between the conflicting parties provides the basis for a sustainable and guaranteed peace between them. It is a collective-security-system, which obliges all the conflicting groups to accept the conditions for mutual, harmonious co-existence of all the people. This is one of the serious tasks of politics to be legalised by constitutional law. There should be legal clauses to deal those who break

the collective-security-system of a nation by bringing them to justice and punishment. Peace, unity and harmony are common goods of a society and any action that interferes with this should be stopped without delay and should not be allowed to spread like a wild fire. It must be mentioned that it is usually ordinary people that suffer under the violence of some minority radicals. Radicalism cannot be solved solely by tolerance.

### **5.6. Remembrance as a Way of Counteracting Violence**

One of the greatest lessons of both the world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the role of remembrance in avoiding such a catastrophe. Every year certain dates of the World Wars are commemorated in public.<sup>13</sup> Certainly these days are not easy to commemorate again and again when the dreadful and grief-stricken past of their forefathers is remembered. However, remembering citizens who lost their lives for the nation and recalling consciously what had happened during the World War and how much suffering it caused reminds everyone of the need for the protection of peace and harmony. The history of war and of a brutal political system is taught in Germany as a compulsory course in schools so that the younger generation does not fall into the trap of violence. Again and again they are reminded about the crimes of their forefathers against humanity, how families and society were crushed and of the exhaustion, despair and anxieties that those former generations suffered, even though the crimes were perpetrated by only a few people, like Adolf Hitler and his co-operators. They acknowledge what their ancestors have done and do not hide them under the notion of “collective guilt.” Any collective guilt originates in specific human hands and human faces; it is personal and never anonymous. “There is no such thing as the guilt or innocence of an entire nation. Guilt is, like innocence, not collective, but personal. There is discovered or concealed individual guilt. There is guilt which people acknowledge or deny. Everyone who directly experienced that era should today quietly ask himself about his involvement then.”<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Some of them are: May 8<sup>th</sup> as the “Anniversary of the End of the war in Europe and of National Socialist Tyranny”; 17<sup>th</sup> June as the “National Remembrance Day”; 03<sup>rd</sup> October as the “Day of Unification”; 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of November as the “People’s Mourning Day”; Last Sunday of November as the “Sunday of the Dead” of both the world wars.

<sup>14</sup>Richard von Weizacker, President of the Federal Republic of Germany: “*Streifzug durch die Geschichte*”: On May 8 1985. <http://www.hariguchi.org/yoichi/weizsaeker.html> (Translated text).

## **6. Conclusion**

Daily news reports reveal the alarming situation in our global village: from Kosovo to Far East Asia, from Afghanistan to Iraq, from Somalia over Sudan to Sierra Leon, Kenya over Uganda to Democratic Republic of Congo, from Pakistan to Kashmir, etc. These places show how fragile the peace process is and how difficult it is to achieve this task of peace! Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow or in the future in these countries and to the people living there. There is a sense of helplessness in the task to overcome the determination to wipe out many other lives for the sake of different types of fanaticism, violation and aggression by the use of suicide bombs. Political power is helpless against such a radical way of destroying the peace by 'living bombs.' The only means of transforming these hard heartened persons is the means of religious asceticism, fasting and controlling one's own passions, meditation and prayer. It could be a proclamation of internal war with the self of the person, where genuine peace rather than violence is the goal.